

Memorandum

To: File From: Cindy J. Nolan, RPM 9/6/90

6-0400
Trip to Waukegan - North Shore Gas facility

Sean Mulroney, ORC 6-7150
John Perrecone, ~~ORC~~
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This was a general reconnaissance trip to the tar pit area in order to sample and inspect relationship between tar pit location and NSG property. NSG had previously stated that the tar pit area was outside property boundary and was located in a general disposal area. NSG is currently checking to determine if there is a relationship between this facility operation and the Waukegan Manufactured Gas and Coke Plant site on the OMC property (for which they have just signed a Consent Order to undertake a RI/FS).

The area of the tar pit is now owned by North Shore Sanitary Dist. In fact, they were there sampling as the TAT arrived. The property parcels and ownership between the tar pit area and the NSG facility are not clear.

Sean, John and I walked the NSG property to see if there were more tar pits or soft ground. There were bare areas, but no obvious tar areas. There were cinder blocks set on one another as though someone was using the area for something. However, there were no signs of recreational use - no bottles, cans or bullet shells. The weeds are high at this time of year, which makes close inspection difficult.

While we watched the TAT sample, a worker from EJ&E Railroad came by. His name is Gary Sweetwood. He was very informative. Mr. Sweetwood has worked for EJ&E for about 24 years, on the tracks in this area. He has pulled a number of blue heron, red fox and deer out of the pit. Sweetwood said it was common knowledge that this pit was the disposal area for NSG, although he does not recall specifically seeing dumping occur. This area was the "back door" of the NSG operation. He also said this was a production plant but he was not aware of any relationship to the coking operations at the OMC parcel. Sweetwood said he did not know any of the NSG employees. He said this plant closed when NSG moved to their current location in Waukegan.

I asked Sweetwood about disposal from EJ&E operations in the area. He said that EJ&E would clean scrap gypsum from the flat cars in the area and when the pile got high enough, they would bring a back hoe in to flatten it. That is why the ground is so soft just south of the pond. The pond area was larger, but gypsum and metal strapping filled part of it. He was fairly

confident that tar would be encountered a few feet below the gypsum. We dug in that area until we encountered water (around 3 feet), but did not see tar substances. The hole was filled back in and no samples were taken.

Sweetwood was not aware of any other chemical substances hauled through this area and no other EJ&E disposal practices. He said, however, EJ&E hauled for the tannery which was just south of the NSG plant. He said there was often liquid dripping from the hides. I did not pursue the tannery information any further.

Mr. Sweetwood was pleased that someone was finally looking into the problem. He was the one who brought the NewSun photographer to the area when the blue herons got coated in tar. In an effort to keep Sweetwood's expectations from rising as a result of EPA's presence, I told him that we had a lot to learn about the facility before we knew what actions to take.

cc: Maureen O'Mara, OSC
Sean Mulroney, ORC